

## Remarks

Reconsideration and allowance of the claims are requested.

The examiner, in his last office action, reported the allowance of claims 2, 3, 6, 7 and 11-14. He also noted an objection to claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, due to the lack of antecedent basis for the “first and second” recesses. In response, the applicant has amended claim 15 to change “first and second” to -- plurality of -- to thereby provide proper antecedent basis. Claim 15 should now be in condition for allowance.

The applicant has also amended the remaining claims to avoid use of the phrase “characterized in that” which is commonly used in European practice, but less common in U.S. practice. The present amendments to change “characterized in that” to -- wherein -- are intended to make the claims comport to U.S. format.

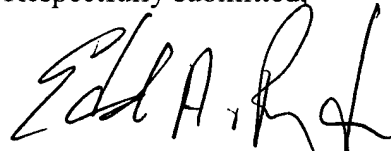
It is noted that all claims stand in allowed or allowable condition, except that the examiner had previously withdrawn claims 8-10 from consideration as non-elected species.

In view of the fact that claims 8-10 depend on an allowed, generic base claim (claim 13), it is respectfully submitted that these claims are also in condition for allowance.

The undersigned authorizes the Commissioner to charge insufficient fees and credit overpayment associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 19-5127, 19378.0012.

Date: April 27, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ed A. Pennington", written over a horizontal line.

Edward A. Pennington, Reg. No. 32,588  
Attorney for Applicants  
Swidler Berlin Shereff Friedman  
3000 K Street, NW, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20007  
Telephone: (202) 424-7605  
Facsimile: (202) 295-8478